

What is an Environmental Management System?

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a system developed according to ISO 14001 requirements or a system created with similar intent. ISO 14001 is an internationally recognized standard for the environment. It provides a systems approach patterned after the Deming model of **plan, do, check** and **act**. ISO 14001 is one of a series of Environmental Standards developed by the International Organization for Standardization.

ISO 14001 contains specific criteria every EMS must include. In general, an EMS is a set of management processes and procedures that allow an organization to analyze, control, and reduce the environmental impact of its activities, products, and services and operate with greater efficiency and control.

What are the Major Elements of an EMS?

To develop an EMS, a company must:

- determine the environmental aspects and impacts
- set objectives and targets
- implement through management
- train all employees in their roles
- document communication procedures
- document the environmental policy
- maintain and update all documents
- establish and maintain emergency response procedures
- monitor and measure implementation
- establish procedures for corrective actions

- maintain all records of documents, procedures, corrective actions, etc.
- establish periodic management review process

An EMS may address issues like eco-labeling, environmental auditing, life cycle assessment, environmental performance evaluation, and environmental aspects in product standards. The focus on management "distinguishes these standards from performance" standards. An EMS helps an organization establish

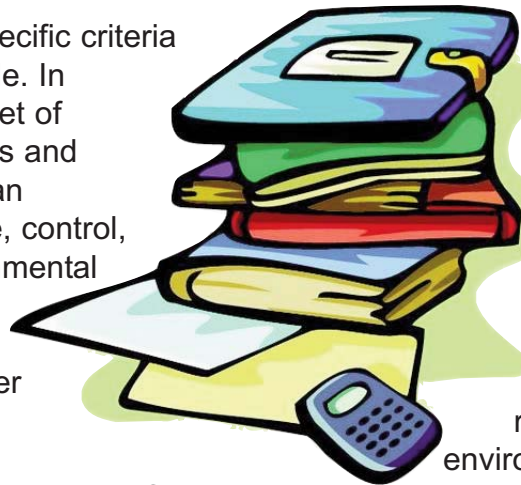
and meet its own policy goals through objectives and targets, organizational structures and accountability, management controls, and review functions, all with top management oversight.

EMSs do not set requirements for environmental compliance, nor do these standards establish requirements for specific levels of pollution prevention or performance. These elements are often a positive outcome of implementing a well planned EMS.

What is Required of Companies When Developing an EMS?

Companies developing an EMS may or may not seek full certification under ISO 14001. The certification adds credibility, because the system is reviewed by an external third party and found to meet all criteria of ISO 14001.

Many companies that export their products, or supply others that export a



final product, are finding ISO certification a necessary component of doing business. For example, suppliers for the large auto makers have been required to obtain ISO 14001 certification to continue their supplier status.

The process of creating and implementing an EMS can help a small business get a handle on all applicable environmental requirements.

EMS Information Resources

If you are interested in developing an EMS for your small business, see the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Design for the Environment (DfE) web site. Some projects help small businesses develop an EMS with DfE elements. Examples include projects with Auto Refinishing shops and Screen Printing operations. The web address is <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/dfe/pubs/projects/index.htm> for all the partnerships/projects.



Contacts for More Information or Assistance

The Small Business Clean Air Assistance Program helps smaller businesses understand and comply with the Clean Air Act regulations. Contact the program's Clean Air Specialists for more assistance: Renée Lesjak Bashel at 608-264-6153 or Tom Coogan at 608-267-9214.



Staff at the University of Wisconsin Extension Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC) can provide information and limited assistance for businesses adopting an EMS. For information, contact 608-265-0385.

If you develop an EMS, you may be eligible to apply for the Department of Natural Resource's Green Tier program. Green Tier can offer eligible companies some flexibility in DNR issued permits and compliance methods. For more information on Green Tier, go to DNR's web page <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cea/environmental/> or contact Mark McDermid at 608-267-3125.